



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2022

Secretary Deb Haaland
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As co-chair of the Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus, I write to express my full support for the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation's (SACHP) nominations for the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Dean's Beauty Salon and Barber Shop, and the Golden West Hotel in Portland, Oregon to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The preparers of these nominations—namely Kimberly Moreland, Caitlyn Ewers, and Matthew Davis—went to great lengths to conduct research, site visits, and oral interviews during the throes of the Covid-19 pandemic. Their diligence ensures the nominations provide complete, accurate, and inclusive histories of the resources and the people associated with them.

The Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Northeast Portland was the home of one of Oregon's oldest Black congregations; Dean's Beauty Salon and Barber Shop in Northeast Portland is the city's oldest, continuously operating Black-owned business; and the Golden West Hotel in Northwest Portland was the first hotel in the city to accommodate Black patrons. These landmarks are all important to understanding our history and demonstrate the resilience of Portland's Black community despite systemic racism and government-sponsored clearance, redevelopment, disinvestment, and gentrification.

Completed in 1923, the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church served as a venue for cultural, social, and political events of importance to the Black community. The church provided critical meeting space for local civil rights organizations, hosting many civil rights leaders, labor activists, and politicians. Mt. Olivet's renowned music ministry program fostered Black artistic expression and cultural pride through its public performances of traditional spirituals and gospel music and its social programs promoted fellowship within the congregation and beyond.

Benjamin and Mary Rose Dean opened Dean's Beauty and Barber Shop in 1956. Despite the discrimination they faced as Black business owners in mid-twentieth century Portland, they established the shop as financially successful and a safe, welcoming gathering space for its clients in Lower Albina. Dean's Beauty Salon and Barber Shop embodies a long tradition of Black entrepreneurship in Inner Northeast Portland, specifically the proliferation of Black-owned

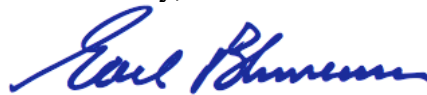
businesses along North Williams Avenue in the first two decades following World War II. It has survived to become the oldest continuously operated Black-owned barber shop in Portland.

The third landmark, the Golden West Hotel, was the only major hotel in Portland to welcome Black guests in the early twentieth century. It provided lodging for Black travelers, particularly men employed in the railroad industry, and visiting Black entertainers, athletes, politicians, and activists, all of whom were denied service at white-owned establishments because of their race. The Golden West Hotel was one of the city's most prominent Black-owned businesses in early twentieth century and one of the most important community spaces available to Black Portlanders.

As with other historically marginalized communities, buildings associated with the Black experience often exhibit physical changes that reflect the community's exclusion from white dominant systems of real estate acquisition, financing, construction, and employment. Such physical changes should not be considered a loss of integrity but rather as significant demonstrations of the Black community's resilience to systemic oppression. Although the three nominated resources exhibit high degrees of integrity, alteration during their periods of significance should be evaluated within the context of the Black experience in Portland and nationally.

With that in mind, I ask that you give the NRHP nominations for the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Dean's Beauty Salon and Barber Shop, and the Golden West Hotel in Portland, Oregon your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

cc: Charles F. Sams III, Director, National Park Service